Social justice and career development

Abstract

Drawing on scholarship in the fields of vocational and industrial/organizational (VIO) psychology, we propose a definition of social justice and assess progress and problems in achieving it. Using a critical psychology lens, we find that the historical focus on higher-income settings and workers with relatively privileged status reflects the neoliberal underpinning implicit in most VIO psychology. We identify six marginalizing conditions which act at macro levels to perpetuate the status quo and restrict progress toward social justice: group bias, forced movement of people, poverty, unemployment and precarious work, lack of decent work, and neoliberalism. We highlight the importance of unpacking issues of context, power and perception implicit in extant research, and draw attention to the multiple ecological levels across which social justice operates. Attending to these issues, a set of recommendations and agenda for future research are proposed which challenge the field to 1) extend the scope of the locations and ecological levels at which research and practice are carried out, 2) highlight who is and is not served and benefitted by research and practice, and 3) question the underlying values and ideological assumptions of existing VIO research and practice. We call for greater critical consciousness amongst VIO psychologists in order to ensure the relevance and benefit of our research and practice for all workers around the globe.

Keywords: social justice, critical psychology, neoliberalism, global, critical consciousness, decent work

Social Justice and Career Development: Progress, Problems, and Possibilities

The past fifty years have witnessed unprecedented changes in the world of work, from the rapid evolution of technology to globalization, leading to questions about the very nature of work in the future (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019a; Thompson & Dahling, 2019). These changes have affected every aspect of work life and career development, with significant implications for endeavors toward social justice. For workers in many parts of the world, such changes have not translated to improvement in their experiences of work, working conditions, or future prospects. A significant proportion of workers and prospective workers (i.e. youth, and those who are unemployed and wish to work) around the globe do not have access to decent work (ILO, 2019a; Allen et al., this issue) or possibilities for engaging in work that meets fundamental needs for survival, connection, or self-determination (Blustein et al., 2019). Even in the U.S., which controls a significant proportion of the world's resources and wealth, growing inequalities persist in access to employment (Thompson & Dahling, 2019).

In this article, we assess the current status of social justice in vocational and industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology[1], and offer recommendations that can help chart future progress. This effort spans the disciplines of both vocational psychology and industrial/ organizational psychology (hereafter referred to as VIO psychology). Recognizing historic disconnects between vocational and I/O psychology (Erdheim et al., 2007; Fouad & Kozlowski, 2019), we approach this task convinced that collaborative and synergistic work between these two disciplines will better serve the long-term interests of workers, organizations, and societies.

Both disciplines have contributed significantly to the literature on social justice and

[1] We use the term industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology to align with the terminology of this journal, however we acknowledge that other terminology is used in other regions of the world (e.g., organizational psychology, work psychology, occupational psychology, etc.)

career development. In fact, the mission statements of the Society for Vocational Psychology and the Society for I/O Psychology are very similar, striving to "improve the physical and mental health of individuals and organizations around the world" (https://www.div17svp.org/), and to "enhance human well-being and performance in organizational and work settings" (https://www.siop.org/About -SIOP/Mission). But efforts of both have been hampered by global grand challenges such as displacement in conjunction with war, violence, and environmental catastrophes, persistent poverty, inequality, climate change, and corruption. These interact with globalization, the precariousness of work, and the ubiquitous influence of neoliberalism. The considerable challenges of the present and those looming on the horizon warrant concerted, strategic efforts that engage the best of what VIO psychology has to offer.

Social justice definitions articulate, "…what individuals, groups, and societies believe is morally and politically right" (p. 4, Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2018). Such beliefs are inherently subjective, and we contend are impacted and shaped in particular by three factors, to which we will return throughout the paper: context, power, and perception. What is believed to be socially just for communities and the individuals within them varies according to the *context* in which justice is examined. It is further shaped according to the relative *power* and privilege of those who have been the object of study and those who lead the research agenda. Finally, and related to both context and power, the dominant philosophy underpinning constructions of social justice has emphasized neoliberalist traditions that focus on individual *perceptions* of fairness.

To this end our paper contributes to extant research on social justice and career development in at least four key ways. One, we articulate a definition of social justice that spans both vocational and industrial/organizational psychology, thereby enabling more comprehensive consideration of progress toward social justice. Two, we provide a lens based on critical

psychology by which to evaluate past, present, and future contributions to social justice, asking who is and is not served by VIO psychology, and to what degree the status quo is justified vs. challenged by our work. In doing so we highlight the importance of unpacking issues of context, power and perception implicit in extant research, and draw attention to the multiple ecological levels at which social justice operates. Three, we identify marginalizing conditions that perpetuate injustice, and identify promising avenues for attending to these conditions. And four, we offer a set of recommendations that build upon this analysis, and based on which future VIO research and practice can focus. Our proposals aim to synthesize past critiques and recommendations, provoke reflection and action, and call attention to the vast challenges before us- challenges that require multifaceted, multidisciplinary, multilevel efforts to ensure and protect the wellbeing of our global community. Ultimately, we argue for greater critical consciousness among VIO psychologists, particularly with respect to how neoliberalism permeates common conceptualizations of our roles, obligations, and possibilities. We argue for a broader, more inclusive scope of work to achieve just and equitable experiences of work for all.

1. Social Justice Defined

We define social justice within VIO psychology contributions as *context-informed scholarship and practice that addresses one or more types of injustice in peoples' experience of, and/or potential to engage in, work and working*. We take an inclusive conceptualization of type of injustice, drawing on the substantial body of research into organizational justice which identifies distributive, procedural and interactional justice (see Rupp et al., 2017, for a recent review), as well as research in community psychology which identifies distributive, procedural, informational, relational, developmental, and cultural justice (see Prilleltensky, 2012). Prilleltensky's (2012) subtypes of informational justice (how and how much information is

shared), relational justice (the extent to which individuals are accorded respect and dignity), developmental justice (the extent to which expectations and responsibilities are commensurate with developmental level and abilities), and cultural justice (the extent to which groups of people are accorded respect and dignity) align with interactional justice and provide much needed nuance to the dimensions of organizational justice, which have been criticized for being poorly conceptualized (Rupp et al., 2017; but see Fortin et al., 2019, for a recent reconceptualization).

In keeping with Prilleltensky's (2012) conceptual model, we argue for the *importance of multilevel engagement with justice*, so that social justice is analyzed within and across multiple ecological levels. Distributive and procedural justice, for example, exist within and across groups, organizations and communities (e.g., allocation of resources, responsibilities, privileges and burdens, how decisions are made and who is involved in decisions that affect everyone in the group). Here we draw attention to work by MacLachlan (2014) who argues for a macropsychology, in which interactions across levels are explicitly studied and understood, such as where micro-level phenomena including inter-individual behavior can be 'understood up' to influence macro-level issues such as sustainability and poverty reduction.

Finally, intrinsic to our definition we assert *a preferential option for securing basic, non-renounceable human rights over the interests of market, profit, and the maintenance of privilege*. Central among these human rights is access to decent work. Implied within this assertion is the need to critically consider the historic emphasis on neoliberalism within VIO research and practice, and how alternative approaches to social justice might be necessary, for example through considering distribution of resources based on need or equality, rather than equity (Deutsch, 1975; Colquitt, Greenberg & Zapata-Phelan, 2005) or a human capability approach that focuses on what people are able to *do* and *be* (Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1999).

In combining these elements we articulate a broad, inclusive, and nuanced definition of social justice which attends directly to three key factors that shape beliefs about social justice within VIO psychology: context, power and perception. We elaborate on each factor below.

Context, Power, and Perception

Conceptualizations of what is fair vary according to *context* (Oltra, Bonache & Brewster, 2013). It is therefore critical that we have a broad understanding of what social justice means for people living and working in different cultural, economic and social contexts. Dynamics of distributive and procedural justice operate within familial, school, community, and governmental contexts, as well as within and across different ecological levels (Prilleltensky, 2012). Employees in different national contexts vary in the degree to which procedural, interactional or distributive justice is most strongly linked with overall perceptions of fairness (Kim & Leung, 2007). In cross-cultural research on organizational justice, relative power difference has been identified as playing a key role in explaining reactions to (in)justice and impact on work outcomes (Lam, Schaubroek & Aryee, 2002; Brockner et al., 2001). The historical context also is salient, given the dynamic evolution of what is considered to be fair over time (e.g., women's right to serve in the military vs. in active duty).

Extending the importance of considering how contextual differences impact definitions of social justice, VIO psychology has been criticized as overemphasizing the experiences of those in positions of *power* (Lefkowitz, 2008), those that are WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) and those who are POSH (Professionals, engaged in Official work in the formal economy, Safe from institutionalized discrimination, in High-income countries; Gloss, et al. 2017). Privilege and power shape beliefs about what is fair and what people deserve (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). We

contend that who actually benefits from VIO psychology, beliefs about whether social justice is an aim within the purview of VIO psychology, and definitions of social justice within VIO psychology reflect the ideologies of those with the power to decide and define. As such, what is known about social justice emphasizes experiences of the relatively privileged, with considerably less focus on those most marginalized and vulnerable workers, despite their majority status, such as the 61% of the global workforce who are located in the informal economy (ILO, 2019a).

Finally, we align with other scholars (e.g., Oltra et al., 2013; Greenwood, 2002), who draw attention to the focus in much research on injustice on individual *perceptions* of justice experiences relative to comparative others. Theories such as Adam's (1965) equity theory focus on individualistic experiences of injustice, comparing individuals' relative inputs and outputs, and leave little room for approaches that emphasize the importance of basic needs, or the variation across cultures (Prilleltensky, 2012). In contrast, Oltra et al. (2013) propose a non-perceptual view of justice that emphasizes the importance of ethics-based approaches as a basis for understanding justice. According to these authors, justice is more than how an individual feels compared with others, and there are important fundamental rights, values and principles that underpin fair treatment. As such they draw on approaches from a range of disciplines that emphasize the importance of non-renounceable rights, values and/or principles, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 1948), nondiscrimination theory (Cortina, 2008; Demuijnck, 2009), and the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 2009). These perspectives challenge the status quo, neoliberal perspective, and emphasize alternative approaches that shift beyond individualistic conceptualizations of justice.

Our definition of social justice within VIO scholarship contributions orients analysis of past, present, and future research and practice. By foregrounding how context, power, and

perception shape conceptualizations of social justice we highlight potential cultural and ideological blinders regarding social justice progress and possibilities.

We recognize the tensions inevitable in offering any definition of social justice. For example, having noted the importance of context, we appear to ignore this importance by crafting a broad and inclusive definition. Having argued that power and privilege are implicated in the ability to define, we manifest that power and privilege by doing so. However, we hope that our explicit acknowledgement of these tensions will enable more nuanced consideration and understanding of social justice and VIO psychology in future research.

A continuous undercurrent to assessment of context, power, and perception in social justice contributions, arising from critical psychology, are the questions of who is (and is not) served by research and practice in VIO psychology, and the degree to which such efforts challenge (or reinforce) the status quo. Invoking a framework of critical psychology assists us to deconstruct the literature on social justice and career development, in order to highlight how injustice continues to be reproduced, and how we might address its reproduction.

2. Critical Psychology Framework

Our analysis of career development and social justice draws upon Prilleltensky and Stead's (2012) application of a critical psychology lens to career development scholarship in VIO psychology. Critical psychology interrogates the manner by which the social sciences justify and perpetuate the injustices of the status quo. Further, a critical psychology lens imagines and "annunciates" new and transformative practices that interrupt and eradicate oppression (Prilleltensky, 1997). A Latin American application of critical psychology pioneered by Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994), liberation psychology, is characterized by Burton and Gomez (2015) as, "the critical and committed (re)construction of a psychology to address the most important social

problems of the oppressed, taking the perspective and history of the oppressed and the social contexts into account" (p. 232, Burton & Gomez, 2015). It is this perspective we hope to center in the present critique. We call for a re-constructed VIO psychology that is centered on the perspectives of those who are marginalized and oppressed, those for whom work is inaccessible, unsafe, precarious, absent meaning, and insufficiently compensated.

A first step to taking a critical approach is understanding how discourse shapes the way we define problems and fashion solutions to those problems. For example, Habermas (1971; as described by Sultana, 2018) characterized three major discourses about career guidance as follows. The technocratic or social efficiency approach views as problematic the lack of match between available human capital and the labor market, with the onus on individuals to acquire the skills demanded by the marketplace in order to best meet the needs of society. The developmentalist or humanist discourse in career guidance focuses on personal growth, exploration, and the exercise of agency to create meaningful careers. Individual actors are guided to make choices that will yield desired career and life outcomes. Finally, emancipatory discourse about career guidance does not attempt to fit or adapt individuals to the existing market, but rather, challenges assumptions about how the market is arranged, and raises questions about who is served by such arrangements. Within emancipatory discourse, solutions to problematic labor arrangements include raising worker consciousness about the injustice of such arrangements, enhancing individual, community, and societal agency for contesting and transforming such arrangements, and promoting liberation from oppression in work and life spaces (Sultana, 2018).

Another example of epistemic dominance is revealed in the discourse defining work itself - who is considered to be working, and what a career is considered to be. Richardson (2012) traces the evolution of discourse from a paradigm of career choice (as if free will and individual

initiative determine career outcomes), to career development (as if careers are linear, progressive, and vertical), to the boundaryless career (as if skillful adaptation to the uncertainties of the changing world of work can offset the deteriorating conditions of market work). Each paradigm leaves untroubled the macro-level arrangements in which workers adapt and adjust to the demands of the contemporary market. Further, discourse regarding work renders invisible and inconsequential the non-market, unpaid work or 'care work' undertaken in the domain of the family, largely by women. As such, Richardson (2012) argues, marginalization of care work reflects and perpetuates the reproduction of gender inequity, and continues despite significant changes in women's market participation and, to a lesser extent, men's care work participation.

Critical analysis of how discourse shapes career counseling practice, theory, and research scholarship reveals the "adjust-challenge dilemma" (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). The majority of scholarship to date focuses on helping individuals *adjust* to the demands of the organization and the labor market (social efficiency discourse) and/or exercise agency to best author their careers and lives (developmentalist discourse), without helping individuals identify systemic injustices in the organization of the marketplace, *challenge* the structures and assumptions that perpetuate these injustices, and pursue new arrangements that reduce or eliminate inequality (emancipatory discourse) (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). Individual interests and choices are central to the social efficiency and developmentalist discourses, which as a result renders most career development scholarship relevant to only a minority of the world, those with choice, privilege, and agency (Blustein, 2006). A critical psychology lens, centered on the perspectives of workers and prospective workers who experience multiple types of injustice, consistently raises the question of whose interests are served, and how injustice is reproduced or interrupted.

Within I/O psychology, similar critiques have been raised regarding the degree to which

I/O psychology contributes to ameliorating injustice when the majority of practice and research has focused at the individual level and on the needs and interests of organizations and management (Baritz, 1960; Katzell & Austin, 1992; Lefkowitz, 2008). The claim of a fundamental and pervasive "POSH" bias (Gloss et al. 2017) builds on and integrates earlier work by other prominent I/O psychologists who have pushed the boundaries of the discipline to more accurately reflect the experiences of all workers around the globe. For example, Lefkowitz (e.g. 2008, 2013) has argued that in its quest for objectivity, the field has allowed economic business values to supplant human-centered considerations, and that the discipline needs to explicitly include a focus on ethics and values by embracing a scientist-practitioner-humanist model. Several other scholars have critiqued how the status quo remains intact in I/O psychology, for example through its predominant focus on higher-income/Western contexts (Gelfand, Leslie & Fehr, 2008), or through the way the curriculum is developed and taught based on ethnocentric theories, without inclusion of indigenous and multicultural/cross-cultural knowledge (McWha, Mji, MacLachlan, & Carr, 2014).

While asserting the critical importance of dismantling oppressive systems, Sultana (2014) also warns, "To deride career guidance practitioners for doing what, at the one-to-one interactive level, can be done, is as ungracious and as perverse as putting down ambulance workers who attend to the wounded, criticizing them for not stopping the war" (p. 8). In a similar vein we affirm the importance of individual and organizational level research and practice that aims to further social justice. However, such contributions are significantly enhanced by acknowledging the role of context, power, and perception in shaping constructions of justice, and by explicit attention to underlying discourses and neoliberal assumptions.

In the present analysis, we therefore foreground a macro-level perspective (without

dismissing contributions at other levels of the ecology) because we believe that this is where VIO psychology has the greatest room for growth and contribution in future research and practice on social justice. Building on social justice research in VIO psychology, we identify six macro-level marginalizing conditions that perpetuate experiences of injustice for workers and prospective workers over time, and which are enabled to replicate by a lack of recognition of the importance of context, power and perception in our study of injustice.

3. Marginalizing Conditions

VIO research and career counseling practice has been characterized by Western European neoliberal perspectives and assumptions such as individualism and an open structure of opportunity, generally focusing on the behavior of White, U.S., educated, affluent men who were able bodied and had choices regarding education and work (Blustein, 2013; Gloss et al., 2017; Gysbers et al., 1998; Henrich et al., 2010). Fifty years ago, assumptions of the White and male standard for behavior were so pervasive that much of the published research did not even report the gender or racial/ethnic composition of research participants, and the vast majority of publications were based on U.S. samples (see for example *JVB 1*(1), 1971). Within this historical context, early VIO contributions to social justice indirectly contested such assumptions by virtue of treating gender and other demographic variables as worthy of attention, and by examining career behaviors in samples other than middle class, able-bodied, college-going or college educated White men. This interrupted a status quo that invisiblized women, ethnic minority, sexual minority, working class and non-college educated workers, but at the same time, typically embedded assumptions that such groups could achieve better career outcomes if they were (helped to be) more like White men.

Despite progress, most VIO research and practice has continued to be characterized by

individualization, distributive justice determined by merit without attention to privilege, uncontested ideological assumptions, and a focus on WEIRD and POSH samples. Research attending to women's experiences in the workforce, including attention to barriers such as sexual harassment, has increased (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2017; Flores, this issue; London & Greller, 1991), but over the past fifty years, attention to the experiences of racial/ethnic minority workers and students constitutes a mere 4.3% of vocational research (Flores et al., 2019) and between 2005 and 2015, about 11% and 22% of vocational psychology articles in primary journals focused on gender and international issues, respectively (Garriott et al., 2017).

While appreciating the contributions of scholarship addressing types of social injustice among marginalized groups, the focus on categorizing individuals into one or more groups that are subject to various types of injustice is fundamentally problematic. Such efforts frequently ignore strengths and assets, lack intersectional perspectives (Levine & Breshears, 2019; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017), and often focus on those with relative privilege within the group (e.g., research on women workers often neglects women of color [Brown & Liu, 2018] and women in low income countries [Schein, 2012]; research on immigrant workers often focuses on voluntary, high skilled workers in the knowledge economy [Cohen et al., 2011]). Further, such work often seeks to describe the impact and outcome of existing injustice, without addressing the cause of it. Where attempts have been made to address the cause of injustice, these causes are all too often ascribed to individuals themselves who can be the target of an intervention, or are discussed as individual level phenomena rather than recognizing the structural conditions underpinning the injustice (Prilleltensky, 1997; Cortina, Rabelo, & Holland, 2018).

For this reason we focus on six marginalizing conditions that emerged from our research as key structural roots of social injustice. As we discuss these marginalizing conditions we also

connect with continuing signs of progress such as the emergence of Humanitarian Work Psychology (Carr, MacLachlan & Furnham, 2010; Berry et al., 2011; McWha-Hermann, Maynard & Berry, 2015; Gloss & Foster-Thompson, 2013), the Decent Work Agenda (DWA, Allan et al., this issue; Blustein, Olle, et al., 2016; Ferraro et al., 2018a; ILO, 2019b), and theoretical models that explicitly attend to systemic marginalization and oppression such as the Psychology of Working Theory (Blustein, 2006; Blustein, et al., 2019; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016). There is evidence that VIO psychology is evolving to include more focus on the margins and new lines of research that emphasize social justice.

3.1 Group Bias

Underpinning and sustaining issues of social injustice are racism, colorism (Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista, 2014), sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, ageism, cissexism, xenophobia, transphobia, and religious intolerance. For efficiency we will refer to these issues collectively as *group bias*. This condition is the combined effect of human prejudice (attitudes that may be conscious or unconscious), stereotyping (beliefs), and discrimination (behaviors) directed toward individuals or groups on the basis of perceived membership in a social group, and functions to generate or sustain group hierarchies (Dovidio, Schellhaas, & Pearson, 2019). Group bias varies across contexts; e.g., people in same-sex partnerships are protected by employment laws in some national settings and considered to be breaking the law in others (Martinez, Sawyer, & Wilson, 2017). The complex and dynamic manner by which power and privilege are imbued in concurrent social identities also produces variation in its effects.

Because group bias functions to reinforce social hierarchies, it is perpetuated unless interrupted (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Ideological beliefs such as social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, religiosity, and political ideology serve to reinforce and/or contest

group bias (Dovidio et al., 2019). Group bias is a source of cultural injustice, functioning across levels of the ecology, affecting education and workplace resources, relationships, decisions, access, and opportunities, and connections between key life contexts of family, education, and workplace (Benner et al., 2018; Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017; Hughes, Watford, & Del Toro, 2016; Levine & Breshears, 2019; Marchiondo, Ran, & Cortina, 2018). The barriers and differential access to resources and opportunities resulting from group bias leads to negative outcomes that are attributed to individual or group deficits, justifying and preserving the bias.

While some bias is explicit and overt, key lines of research on implicit bias have demonstrated its operation and consequences in organizations (Jost et al., 2009) and education (Girvan et al., 2017). Important work also is being done to understand the effects of stereotype threat in organizations and education settings (Baysu et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 2016; Walton, Murphy, & Ryan, 2015). Noting the diversity management trend to provide unconscious bias training within organizations, Noon (2018) argued, "This is not necessarily bad if it gets people talking about discrimination, but it is yet another distraction from the embedded, structural disadvantages within organizations; disadvantages that require far more radical solutions than introspective sessions that simply nudge managers and employees, often begrudgingly, into recognizing that they are biased" (p. 206). As such, group bias interventions must address multiple levels to transform the contexts, processes, and policies that perpetuate it (Barron & Hebl, 2010; Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2017; Marchiondo et al., 2018; Noon, 2018; Sue, 2008).

The study of individuals and groups in VIO psychology who experience group bias yields critical information regarding barriers and assets that can infuse research, theory development, and practice. Indeed, across the breadth of VIO psychology, attention to sexual orientation (Allan, Tebbe, Bouchard, & Duffy, 2019; Martinez, Hebl, Smith, & Sabat, 2017; Martinez,

Sawyer & Wilson, 2017), social class (Ali, 2013; Autin & Allan, 2019; Kallschmidt & Eaton, 2019), aging (Zacher, this issue), and disability status (Colella & Bruyère, 2011; Graham et al., 2019; Pham & Murray, 2019) in work and career development is growing, along with attention to how people with marginalized social identities experience exclusion and discrimination in their education and work lives, such as immigrants (Cohen et al., 2011; Stebleton & Eggerth, 2012), transgender individuals (Law, Martinez, Ruggs, Hebl, & Ackers, 2011), and undocumented workers (Fernández-Esquer, Agoff, & Leal, 2017). Such research may or may not serve to interrupt the status quo, depending in part on the extent to which privilege and ideology shape the questions and conceptualization of the problem, and constrict interventions and implications to the individual, intra or interpersonal level.

To further illustrate, significant efforts in VIO psychology have been directed toward increasing the diversity of education and work settings, for example, women and people of color in STEM (Fouad & Santana, 2017; Garriott et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2017). These efforts can contribute to distributive justice by enhancing opportunities for groups that historically have been excluded. But increasing the diversity of a setting, without addressing the group bias that has maintained homogeneity, may only serve to replicate the status quo (Lavigne & Rauvola, 2018; McWhirter & Cinamon, in press). If the curriculum and the workplace or organizational practices and norms continue as before, the incoming underrepresented students and workers are likely to be met with resentment, exclusion, and even hostility (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017; Danbold & Huo, 2017; Gelfand et al., 2017; Patton, 2016). Fostering inclusion goes beyond diversity (Ferdman, 2014; 2017) to promote procedural, relational, informational, and cultural justice. Attention to how oppression and power shape the education and work experiences and outcomes of those with *more* privileged identities is also critical to

deconstructing notions of fairness, merit, and justice (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017).

A nascent literature on emancipatory career guidance interventions offers possibilities for contesting group bias and other marginalizing conditions through VIO practice. Strategies for responding to five manifestations of oppression (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) in the workplace are framed by Hooley and Sultana (2016). For example, with respect to exploitation (unfair compensation, coercive relations), intervention implications include taking a stand regarding unfair pay, critiquing precarious work, empowering vulnerable groups, and challenging stereotypes. More recently, career guidance practices explicitly dedicated to social justice goals (Hooley, Sultana, & Thompsen, 2018) and embedded in emancipatory approaches (Hooley, Sultana, & Thompsen, 2019) have been offered.

Another promising development relative to group bias, and consistent with emancipatory approaches, is the relatively recent surge of scholarship on critical consciousness, an "antidote to oppression" (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). Critical consciousness refers to growing awareness of oppressions and privileges operating within peoples' lives, developing agency, and taking action against oppression (Freire, 1970; Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). Critical consciousness has been associated with positive vocational and educational outcomes for marginalized youth (Cabrera et al., 2014; Diemer, 2009; Diemer, et al., 2010; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016; Rapa et al., 2018) and women survivors of domestic violence (Chronister & McWhirter, 2006). Fostering critical consciousness of group bias interrupts a status quo of individual blame and responsibility for circumstances, directs attention to structural and systemic problems that constrain educational and work-related outcomes, and affirms agency and capacity for self-determined action to address oppression. Measurement of and research on critical consciousness has proliferated in the past decade, and this construct has been included in the

Psychology of Working Theory as a moderator of the effects of marginalization and economic constraints on work volition and career adaptability (Duffy et al., 2016).

3.2 Forced movement of people

A record high number of over 70 million people were forcibly displaced in 2018 due to persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations, including those internally displaced (58%), refugees (37%) and asylum seekers (5%) (UN, 2019a). These numbers include over 27,000 asylum-seeking and 111,000 refugee children who are unaccompanied. While many of the world's immigrants leave their country of origin voluntarily, for reasons including economic and educational opportunity and quality of life, increasing numbers of people around the world are forced to migrate to escape from violent conflict, oppression, starvation (Baranik et al., 2018) or as victims of human trafficking (UN, 2018).

A relatively new and growing group of refugees includes those forced to leave their territory as a consequence of global climate change and/or an environmental disruption that destroys their ability to sustain a livelihood (e.g., deforestation, desertification, rising sea level). These refugees are particularly vulnerable as their protection is not covered under the UN 1951 Refugee Convention (Berchin, Valduga, Garcia, & de Andrade Guerra, 2017). Refugees and asylum-seekers make up 10% of immigrants worldwide, and this group of immigrants is far more likely to move to developing countries (82.5%) that are proximal to the countries of origin, but that do not have the market capacity or social support mechanisms to shelter, integrate, and employ large numbers of refugees (UN, 2019a).

Highly skilled voluntary immigrants employed in the knowledge economy anchor one end of the immigrant continuum, and when immigrants are addressed in the career development literature this is typically the group of focus (Cohen, et al., 2011). Forced migrants, along with

low- or un-skilled immigrant workers are at the other end (Bimrose & McNair, 2011). Irregular or undocumented migrant workers cross borders often at great risk to sustain their families; they are highly vulnerable and may have entered their host country without authorization in order to escape violence, or have been denied asylum but are fearful of returning to their country of origin (Marfleet & Blustein, 2011). Immigrants awaiting asylum hearings are not eligible for work permits in many countries, often have trauma histories, and may have been under- or unemployed in their country of origin (Schultheiss et al., 2011). Long term cycles of migrating for seasonal employment and returning have been affected by policy changes that make border crossing too dangerous, separating families and communities indefinitely, yet the "motor of forced migration," neoliberal globalization (Marfleet & Blustein, 2011), continues unabated.

Undocumented workers experience lower levels of occupational safety (Flynn, Eggerth, & Jacobson, 2015) and along with undocumented students, often experience chronic insecurity and hypervigilance (Bjorklund, 2018; Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017; Kantamneni et al., 2016). A 2018 special issue of JVB dedicated to refugees sheds light on their experiences of adversity and trauma, and their coping strategies, resiliency, and agency as they deal with devastating loss and change, adapt and reestablish their lives, and secure employment (Newman, Bimrose, Nielson, & Zacher, 2018). For immigrants forced to relocate due to environmental disasters associated with climate change, evidence of adverse mental health consequences has been established, but little attention has been given to their long term education and work outcomes (Flores et al., 2019).

Bimrose and McNair (2011) critique the reliance on traditional career guidance and counseling approaches that emphasize, "personal development, choice, rationality and self-actualization" for work with immigrants. They propose that career development in a context of global migration (a) shift to a multicultural approach (in which individual identities interact with

sociopolitical contexts and shape access to opportunity), (b) emphasize career adaptability as a proactive response to an unstable and dynamic world of work, and (c) expand the role of practitioners to include advocacy, so as to address contextual and macrosystemic issues such as labor and immigration policies and discrimination. As such, their recommendations expand beyond developmentalist to include emancipatory approaches to VIO psychology.

Because so many critical aspects of refugee resettlement and employment are regulated by national policies, and because the number of refugees worldwide is increasing (UN, 2019), VIO psychology efforts to enhance social justice in this arena must operate at multiple levels of the ecology. One ILO-UN collaboration is focused on advancing the knowledge base on relationships between desertification, migration, and employment as well as developing policy and programmatic responses that integrate these linkages (ILO, 2019c). Marfleet and Blustein (2011) called for VIO research to establish a basis for informing changes to the national and international policies and structures that marginalize and criminalize irregular migrants, a recommendation also salient to improving conditions for refugees and asylum seekers.

3.3 Poverty

Extreme poverty, currently defined as living on less than U.S. $1.90 per day, affects 8.6% of the global population (UN, 2019b). This rate has declined from 16% in 2010, but is rising in sub-Saharan Africa (40%) and increased by 1 million people in the U.S. since 2010 (UN, 2019b). The Multidimensional Poverty Index (UN Development Program, 2019) assesses poverty as a function of 10 indicators in order to better illuminate the complex nature of deprivation. According to this index, 23.1% of people (in 101 countries assessed) experience multidimensional poverty. Both measures of poverty reveal vast differences in poverty rates within and between countries and regions of the world.

The marginalizing condition of poverty intersects with work and income inequality through unemployment, reemployment, systemic and societal factors, and the changing nature of employment (Thompson & Dahling, 2019). Those with marginalized identities tend to be overrepresented amongst the poor, and face greater barriers to shifting out of poverty (Thompson & Dahling, 2019). This may, at least in part, be due to a relative lack of social capital and ability to navigate job loss (Lippmann, 2008), reinforcing the lines of advantage and disadvantage between those with power, and those without.

Poverty replicates across generations such that opportunities are constricted by virtue of the circumstances into which people are born. Those living in poverty and who experience the effects of group bias typically experience the greatest constraints of the opportunity structure. Profound variation in access to education and education quality within and across national contexts limits the extent to which education generates individual social mobility (Yaish & Anderson, 2012). There is some evidence that as income inequality has increased in the U.S. (Mitnik et al., 2016) and Canada (Connolly, Haeck, & Lapierre, 2019), social mobility has decreased. Other evidence indicates that immigration and industrialization contribute far more to understanding cross-national variations in social mobility (Cornia & Martorano, 2012). According to Hout (2017), the assessment of whether fairness of opportunity exists in a given society should focus not on social mobility, but on the degree to which social origins (e.g., race, birth weight, neighborhood poverty) constrain successful employment and upward mobility.

Historically, VIO psychology has been relatively silent on the topic of poverty, often focusing on its psychological outcomes (e.g., Haushofer & Fehr, 2014), or how to intervene at the individual level with people living in poverty (Meara et al., 1997; Heppner & O'Brien, 2005), rather than considering poverty reduction as an end goal for psychological research itself

(Carr & Bandawe, 2011). Since the turn of the century, however, there has been increasing effort to critique vocational theories regarding relevance to people living in poverty, and more recommendations that expand beyond the individual to include community level and policy interventions (Ali, 2013; Blustein, 2011; Juntunen, Ali, & Pietrantonio, 2013; Sloan, 2005; Thompson & Dahling, 2019). Further, there is increasing application of theories of VIO psychology to poverty reduction, for example, examining the role of entrepreneurship in Africa (Gielnik & Frese, 2013), the intersection of psychology with behavioral economics (Anand & Lea, 2011), the role of organizational policies on employee outcomes (Carr et al., 2010), and support practices for international aid and development workers (Foo, 2015).

Social, economic, and environmental factors that comprise the structure of opportunity have been incorporated into numerous career development and/or choice models (Astin, 1984; Krumboltz, 1994, Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Super, 1992). For example, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) describes how the opportunity structure affords access to and shapes learning experiences, and affects the translation of interests into career goals and outcomes. In spite of its inclusion in theory, to a great extent vocational psychology has continued to give minimal attention to how the structure of opportunity, sociopolitical context, and social class influence vocational behavior (Diemer & Ali, 2009). In the words of Flores et al. (2019), “As long as the structural foundations of racial stratification and economic inequality remain intact, vocational psychology will be impeded from supporting the economic well-being of most people of color” (p. 196). A promising development is the significant attention granted to the opportunity structure in the Psychology of Working Theory (Duffy et al., 2016), which we describe later.

Finally, income inequality, wage stagnation, and inadequate wages make *working poverty*

a reality for many workers in the world. Over 25% of workers in low to middle income countries experience extreme or moderate poverty (ILO, 2019a). Wealth is concentrated among small segments of society and grows exponentially among those with the greatest wealth (e.g., Saez & Zucman, 2016), while workers' wages have stagnated and do not provide sufficient opportunity to escape poverty (OECD, 2018). Neoliberal assumptions about poverty and income inequality help sustain the reproduction of inequality, for example, income inequality is perceived to be less unjust in the context of structural and cultural ideologies attributing poverty to internal (ability, effort) characteristics (Schneider & Castillo, 2015). When income inequality is viewed as the consequence of differential effort and ability, it is not seen as a marginalizing condition but is attributed to individual and group deficits; this exemplifies the problematic nature of viewing distributive justice through the lens of equity theory (Oltra, Brewster & Bonache, 2013).

A particularly promising area of research attending to poverty and income inequality focuses on conceptualizing and evaluating living wages. Living wages are those that make life more than just bearable but where capabilities are nurtured and enabled (Carr, Parker, Arrowsmith, & Watters, 2016). This means that living wages allow workers to not just meet their basic needs, but also attain more capabilities or freedoms and opportunities to make choices and to function in ways that they intrinsically value (Carr et al., 2016). Preliminary findings suggest the potential for identifying a wage point below which workers experience workplace injustice and low life and work satisfaction (Carr et al., 2018). A psychological perspective on living wages demonstrates a concrete focus beyond allocation of resources based purely on concepts like equity, which compare workers' ratios of inputs and outputs against one another and any difference is attributed to individual characteristics, toward a recognition of quality of life as a fundamental non-renounceable right, and the responsibility of organizations to implement

policies that enhance the quality of life of employees.

Most psychological research to date has focused on conceptualizing the living wage (Smith, 2015; Yao, Parker, Arrowsmith & Carr, 2017), extending work by economists who have focused on the extrinsic value of earning a living wage, to now focus on the intrinsic value of a living wage. Some research is beginning to examine contextual differences in living wages (e.g. Carr et al., 2018; Yoelao, Mohan & Sombatwattana, 2019). Future research needs to study the psychological impact of earning a living wage for individuals, families, and communities, as well as understand how paying a living wage impacts organizational outcomes. In keeping with our critique of social justice contributions within VIO psychology, the definition of living wage must be continuously interrogated not only with respect to context (Yoelao et al., 2019) but also power (e.g., how and who determines what is sufficient) and perception (e.g., what assumptions and discourse underlie constructions of living wage and capability).

3.4 Unemployment and Precarious Work

The global rate of unemployment (the share of the labor force that is seeking and available to work but is not employed) is 4.9% and has decreased since the great recession (ILO, 2019a). This number masks key justice issues, one of which is discrepancies associated with age and gender. For example, 11.8% of 15-24 year old youth are unemployed (ILO, 2019a). The global percentage of youth who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) is 21.2% (UN, 2019), including 30% of young women and 13% of young men (ILO, 2019a). Youth unemployment estimates ranges as high as 36% in Spain and 40% in South Africa (UN, 2019). Across age groups, women's unemployment consistently is higher than that of men, with a global estimate of 5.4% relative to men's 4.7% (ILO, 2019a). Such global estimates also mask that a significant proportion of those employed are working in poor quality precarious jobs that

lack benefits, stability, and sufficient pay (ILO, 2019a).

Unemployment has devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities, including adverse effects on psychological well-being and health, and economic effects that persist even after reemployment (Thompson & Dahling, 2019). Unemployment intersects with group bias, disproportionately affecting Black and Latinx workers, older workers, and workers with disabilities. For example, in the U.S. 8% of workers with disabilities are unemployed relative to 3.7% of workers without disabilities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Reemployment in a decent job helps to mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment, but is influenced by group bias and a variety of other factors, many of which are outside the control of individuals (Thompson & Dahling, 2019). Unemployment may trigger unconscious bias amongst potential employers (see Melloy & Liu, 2014) and may particularly affect older workers (Wanberg, Kanfer, Hamann & Zhang, 2016). Policy development that could help address chronic unemployment has largely been undertaken by other social science fields, absent the contributions of VIO psychology (Blustein, Medvede, & Wan, 2012).

First time workers and those who are re-employed are increasingly likely to be engaged in work that is precarious. Precarious employment refers to, “a multi-dimensional construct encompassing dimensions of employment insecurity, individualized bargaining relations between workers and employers, low wages and economic deprivation, limited workplace rights and social protection, and powerlessness to exercise legally granted workplace rights” (p. 234, Benach, Vives, Tarafa, Delclos, & Muntaner, 2016). Although unskilled workers are most likely to be in precarious employment, university graduates are increasingly faced with lower paying temporary or contract work that is inconsistent with their field of study (MacDonald, 2016).

Precarious work adversely affects the health of workers and their families (Benach et al.,

2016), and such workers are vulnerable with respect to the security of their position, and lack of benefits, legal protection, workplace rights and bargaining power. They largely are invisible in macroeconomic indicators of employment, for example, the ILO counts as employed those who have worked at least one hour for pay in the reference week (ILO, 2019a).

The precariousness of work is growing globally (e.g., Kalleberg & Hewison, 2013) in conjunction with a neoliberal agenda in which aims of profit, deregulation, flexibility, and the shifting of risk from employers to employees are top priorities that guide policy and decision-making (Blustein et al., 2016). As with unemployment, there are consistent demographic differences in precarious work. For example, immigrants, women, and particularly women responsible for the care of dependent family members are more likely to be engaged in precarious work (Hašková, Dudová, Soulsby, Hollinshead, & Steger, 2017; Hira-Friesen, 2018). Allan (this issue) assesses the state of precarious work, and interventions designed to promote the transition from precarious to secure and decent work.

3.5 Lack of Decent Work

Decent work, "involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men." (ILO, n.d.). A lack of decent work is a marginalizing condition that affects many workers throughout the world; "a majority of the 3.3 billion people employed globally in 2018 experienced a lack of material well-being, economic security, equal opportunities or scope for human development" (p. 1, ILO, 2019a). In Africa, 68% of workers have insecure, low paying jobs, largely in the informal work sector. In Latin America and the Caribbean 53% of

workers are in informal employment with as many as 80% in some countries (e.g., Bolivia, Guatemala). In Asia and the Pacific, nearly 70% of workers are in the informal sector, with nearly 90% in Southern Asia. In Europe and Central Asia, temporary and involuntary part time work is on the rise in many countries (ILO, 2019a).

Decent work is embedded within the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015). The agenda proposes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to secure human rights, dignity, and equality for all people, end poverty and violence, and protect the planet through global partnerships. This vision for the future represents a collective global effort of 'annunciation' that overtly prioritizes people over profit and market. Further, it acknowledges key forces that have and will continue to have devastating and inequitable effects on workers around the world: Poverty, global climate change, war, violence, and displacement. Decent work for all is encompassed in SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; UN, 2015). The fair and equal treatment of people in all workplaces is achieved, "through the promotion of social dialogue, extended social protection, employment generation, and respect of fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards, a set of concepts referred to as the Decent Work Agenda." (ILO, 2017, p. 9). This agenda is an international effort that aims to improve the experience of work for all people.

While many VIO researchers have studied topics like worker wellbeing and working conditions which clearly contribute to decent work, only recently has the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) itself become an explicit focus of study. A leading contribution to the DWA from vocational psychology comes from Duffy et al. (2016), who define decent work as consisting of: "(a) physical and interpersonally safe working conditions (e.g., absent of physical, mental, or

emotional abuse), (b) hours that allow for free time and adequate rest, (c) organizational values that complement family and social values, (d) adequate compensation, and (e) access to adequate health care." (p. 130). I/O psychologists have also focused on operationalizing decent work, for example, developing and validating the decent work questionnaire (Ferraro et al., 2018a), and examining the role of decent work in motivation of knowledge workers, and the mediating role of psychological capital (Ferraro et al., 2018b).

The promise of the DWA is that it potentially addresses each of the marginalizing conditions we describe. However, the lack of access to decent work in many regions of the world is growing, and concerns have been raised that the DWA has been compromised by neoliberal influences within the ILO (Blustein, Olle, Connors-Kellgren, & Diamonti, 2016; Maul, 2019). The failure to take actual steps toward realizing the DWA among developed countries that have endorsed it, and the disconnection between the DWA and goals of gender equality, also have been raised as concerns (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2015).

The Psychology of Working Framework (PWF; Blustein, 2006, 2013; Blustein, Kenna et al., 2008) addresses unemployment and precarious work and has potential for advancing the DWA. The PWF confronts the narrow range of people and careers on which traditional vocational psychology has focused, expands the conceptualization of work to highlight its role in fulfillment of key human needs for survival, connection, and self-determination, and positions work (including care work) within the larger context of social, economic, and political structures and constraints. Blustein and colleagues (Blustein et al., 2019) have offered the PWF and its theoretical offspring the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT, Duffy et al., 2016) as a heuristic structure for conceptualizing past and concurrent efforts to promote human rights in career development, and for carrying out the DWA of the ILO. In brief, PWT incorporates structural

(economic constraints and marginalization) and individual (work volition and career adaptability) characteristics in predicting decent work, with moderators including proactive personality, critical consciousness, social support, and economic conditions. Also included in the model is how decent work satisfies needs for survival, social connection, and self-determination, and their influences on work fulfillment and well-being.

PWT has been applied to workers in different country contexts (e.g., Turkey [Kozan, Isik, & Blustein, 2019], Korea [Kim, Duffy, et al., 2019]), as well as from different social backgrounds (e.g., Allan, Autin, & Duffy, 2014, Autin, Duffy, et al., 2018, Douglass et al., 2017), and different life stages (e.g., Kim, Fouad, Maeda, Xie, & Nazan, 2018). This burgeoning literature is yielding support for the model and expanding the relevance of VIO psychology beyond its historically narrow samples and settings. Recommendations by Blustein and colleagues (2019) for future research and practice toward decent work for all from within PWF/PWT include enhancing social protections for unemployed and precarious workers, increasing attention to care work, and increasing people's capacity to cope with and adapt to the changing world of work. These recommendations attend to multiple levels of the ecology and reflect the human-centered approach to decent work advocated by the ILO.

3.6 Neoliberalism

The golden thread linking the five previous marginalizing conditions is the continued reliance on micro-level considerations that prioritize individual gain, and on understanding workplace experiences for the sake of organizational efficiency and profit (Islam & Zyphur, 2006; 2009). In other words, the largely unquestioned acceptance of neoliberalism and individualism as the basis of VIO psychology (Bal & Doci, 2018). Centering social justice efforts in VIO psychology on those who are marginalized and oppressed requires attending to

this omnipresent force in our global society.

Neoliberalism reflects an overarching belief in the market, where people exercise freedom through consumption (e.g., purchasing goods and services). Social security, health care and education are market goods for which quality is ensured by competition (removing the need for government safety nets or unions). Humans are valued in relation to their fit to the market, which is optimized by individual effort, ensuring everyone is responsible for their own situation. All of this translates to prioritizing worker efficiency, flexibility, productivity, and skills for a high tech knowledge economy, which are consistent with social efficiency and humanist discourses within career guidance (Sultana, 2018).

Within the workplace, the predominance of the neoliberal perspective has led to concepts such as commitment, wellbeing and employment being valued for their contributions to objective organizational success rather than for their positive impact on the individual themselves (Bal & Doci, 2018). There is a tendency to assume that employees act in their own best interests (Anand & Lea, 2011) and that for maximum efficiency these interests should align with those of their place of work (see Van Vianen, 2001). Similarly, neoliberalism helps explain the global lack of comprehensive human rights-based national policies that affirm the critical importance of non-market care work for all societies (ILO, 2018; Richardson, 2012). Neoliberalism shapes career guidance discourse to normalize the production of young people who meet the demands of the labor market—if they are sufficiently motivated, able, flexible, and strategic (Hooley, Sultana, & Thompsen, 2018). Neoliberal influences on VIO psychology have continuously drawn our focus to groups (the WEIRD and the POSH) that can most clearly contribute to organizational and market outcomes. A neoliberal system benefits those with the greatest privilege, and "…wealth is often achieved at the expense of another's poverty" (Gerard, 2017, p. 410).

There have been some efforts to explicitly address the limitations of the neoliberal system and to offer alternative approaches. The capability approach was proposed as an alternative way to measure human development and wellbeing that is not tied to profit, wealth, or resources (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003). It can be considered an alternative conceptualization to a neoliberal approach because it does not emphasize a 'more as best' approach, or even a 'greater good' approach, but rather it remains focused at the individual level and on the ability of everyone to lead the lives they themselves wish to lead. Capabilities include innate characteristics, the readiness to engage competencies that have been developed, and environments that provide the structures and freedoms allowing for the deployment of competencies. Capability is a function of agency within structural constraints that limit real options and shape perceptions of what is possible and desirable. In this sense, invoking a capability approach within career development integrates developmentalist with emancipatory approaches, by placing at least equal emphasis on changing environments so that human potential is maximized.

In shifting away from a focus on resources toward individual freedoms (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003), the capability approach highlights the importance of wellbeing, both in terms of the level of functioning as well as the freedom to choose how to function. Importantly, the capability approach does not pass judgement on how people choose to function, even if their choice is detrimental to them; this approach posits that it is their freedom to choose that is important (Downs & Swailes, 2013; Gagnon & Cornelius, 2000). Nussbaum (2003) argues that specification of the most important capabilities to promote and protect (e.g., *life* or the ability to live a normal length life without premature death; *bodily integrity* or freedom of movement and freedom from assault, violence and the opportunity to make choices regarding sexuality and reproduction) are essential to developing a "normative conception of social justice" that attends

to gender equality.

The capability approach has had significant traction in multiple disciplines, but while it has been applied to workplace equality (e.g., Gagnon & Cornelius, 2000) and sustainable employability (Van der Klink et al., 2016), it has had little traction within mainstream VIO psychology. One important exception is Gloss et al.'s (2017) use of the capability approach to critically examine who is at the center of I/O psychology research (the POSH). However, "capabilities are only as good as the system they reside in" (Gerard, 2017, p. 412), implying a deeper level of structural consideration is needed. Islam and Zyphur (2009) argue that there is promise for VIO psychology to shift beyond a focus on positivism and its emphasis on profit and management.

The emergence of Humanitarian Work Psychology (HWP) is another example of how a critical lens can be applied to I/O psychology and can shift who is being served by the research that we do. HWP developed within I/O psychology as a new area of research and practice with a clear focus on enhancing human welfare (Berry et al., 2011). As such it places marginalized workers at the forefront of its focus, alongside other non-traditional workers including those in humanitarian aid and development settings (McWha-Hermann et al., 2015). HWP emerged as a reaction to the historic focus of I/O psychology on the corporate sector, arguing that VIO psychologists have the potential to make great contributions to poverty reduction through application of our tools and theories to humanitarian and development work settings (Berry et al., 2011), and to improving the working conditions of vulnerable and marginalized workers in all settings (Carr, MacLachlan & Furnham, 2011). The Global Organisation for HWP (GOHWP) serves as a coordinating body for VIO psychologists that want to connect with others on projects that enhance human welfare, and address poverty. It also advocates for more balanced inclusion

of prosocial and humanitarian projects in I/O psychology curriculum, and supports significant efforts at the United Nations (Scott, 2011).

Others have begun to push for critical reconsideration of I/O's focus in order to ensure relevance and sustainability of the field for all workers and organizations, now and in the future (e.g. Bal & Doci, 2018; Doci & Bal, 2018, Bal et al., 2019). Similarly, Hooley et al. (2018; 2019) illuminate the pervasive influence of neoliberalism in career guidance practice and research, and propose alternatives and strategies that contest its underlying assumptions and values.

In summary, we contend that the marginalizing conditions of group bias, forced movement of people, poverty, unemployment and precarious work, lack of decent work, and neoliberalism perpetuate injustice at multiple levels of the ecologies in which workers and prospective workers live. These conditions replicate without interruption within social efficiency and developmental discourses of VIO psychology, aided by lack of recognition of the importance of context, power and perception in our study of injustice.

4. Reconstructing VIO Psychology for Inclusive Social Justice

A reconstructed VIO psychology centered on the perspectives of those who are marginalized and oppressed, those for whom work is inaccessible, unsafe, precarious, absent meaning, and insufficiently compensated, must prioritize addressing marginalizing conditions. It must acknowledge how context, power, and perception have directed the gaze of VIO to narrow groups and rationalized conditions of injustice. As such, we organize our ideas in this section around the three factors we have identified as shaping beliefs about social justice: context, power and perception (see Figure 1), and offer suggestions for future efforts that embrace these factors and engage with multiple levels of the ecology. Specifically, we highlight the need for future research to question the locations and levels of analysis typically focused on in our work

(context), as well as who is studied and served (power). Finally, we question the ideological underpinning and associated implicit assumptions of the discipline, examining how these align with broader global goals like the SDGs (UN, 2015) and fundamental human rights (perception).

insert Figure 1 here

4.1 Context

Our discussion of the role of context speaks to examining the contexts in which we have carried out VIO psychology research and practice and conceptualized social justice, the level of analysis of most VIO psychology research and practice, and how contextual biases shape our theories, knowledge and understanding of social justice.

A reconstructed VIO psychology would move research and practice outside of North American and Western European contexts, engage designs and methods that account for the forced and voluntary movement of people, and immerse in study of the informal economy that is home to the majority of workers. Recent investigations of decent work in eight distinct national settings (Duffy, Blustein, Allan, Diemer, & Cinamon, 2020) as well as progress in the development of HWP around the globe (McWha-Hermann et al., 2015) shows clear intention to stretch beyond the traditional VIO psychology purview. Research contributions should contextualize participants with respect to structural and systemic advantages and disadvantages, including marginalizing conditions, and should move beyond dichotomous indicators of employment to capture variation in the nature and quality of employment.

We also must engage in research that examines connections between the global and the local, both in terms of national and international contexts but also in terms of considering issues in a cross-level way. A focus on how specific or combined marginalizing conditions affect families and communities, rather than individuals, for example, could better highlight the manner

by which individualistic solutions preserve the status quo. At the same time, just because research focuses at the individual or community level does not preclude a contribution to higher ecological levels – e.g. to poverty reduction or climate change. A tension inherent with such a lens is between addressing immediate, critical needs – responding to the unemployed worker in front of us—and the pursuit of longer-term, deeper systemic change.

One way to highlight cross-level connections is to make consistent, explicit connections between VIO scholarship and the United Nations SDGs. For example, journals could ask authors to highlight how their work contributes to the SDGs - a current requirement of at least one APA journal (*International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*). In considering how their research has implications for "understanding up" (MacLachlan, 2014) researchers can connect with global challenges like the SDGs, which extend beyond decent work and address all of the marginalizing conditions (UN, 2015). Researchers in the field of HWP have already begun to do this, for example McWha-Hermann et al.'s (2015) book highlights case studies by I-O psychologists that meet each of the Millennium Development Goals (predecessors to the SDGs). The SDGs can be used as a roadmap for poverty reduction, and provide the opportunity for VIO psychology to contribute to global issues within an interdisciplinary context.

In order to address the macro-level changes necessary for progress toward social justice, engagement and collaboration across disciplines and with national (APA, governmental [Thompson & Dahling, 2019]), governmental bodies (e.g., departments or ministries of labor), and international organizations and networks (ILO, UN) will be necessary, though not sufficient. Professional bodies like SIOP and IAAP have a team of volunteers devoted to interfacing with the United Nations (Scott, 2011). VIO psychologists have much to offer the mission of the ILO (see specific suggestions by Blustein, Masdonati, & Rossier, 2017). Such engagement can help

promote psychological research to decision makers, and connect agencies with VIO psychology areas of expertise, such as measurement and how to operationalize broad topics like poverty and decent work. Further, VIO psychology needs to shift into the space traditionally filled by economic scholars to be front and center in the search for people-centered solutions to global employment issues (Blustein et al., 2019). There is much to be done to advance understanding of the complex relationships between marginalization, marginalizing conditions, and the physical and mental health and well-being of workers and prospective workers (Duffy et al., 2019) and to highlight the psychological processes and factors critical to evaluating broad policies such as guaranteed income (Blustein et al., 2019). Engaging with and informing policy makers is a necessary skillset for achieving these goals (Ali, Flanagan, Pham, & Howard, 2018; Fouad & Kozlowski, 2019) that should be incorporated into professional preparation and competencies.

4.2 Power

Related to the question of VIO research and practice contexts is the critical question of *who* is and is not being studied and served. Why are those most affected by marginalizing conditions the least likely to be centered in VIO work? Our knowledge of WEIRD and POSH workers does not contribute to understanding or ameliorating unjust conditions for the workforce engaged in the informal economy (ILO, 2019a), tenuous workers and those with second jobs (Bergman & Jean, 2016) or those who provide care work within and outside of the market (ILO, 2018; Richardson, 2012). Nor does this work illuminate how privilege and oppression structure the advantages and opportunities of the WEIRD and POSH, yet they serve as the normative standards against others are compared (Bergman & Jean, 2016). Lack of representativeness renders suspect our fundamental construct definitions, for example, what is considered ‘flexible’ from a management purview may be experienced by precarious employees as unpredictable and

irregular (Bergman & Jean, 2016), and necessitates scrutiny, culling, and/or adaptation of existing theories and frameworks (DaSilva, Paiva, & Ribeiro, 2016).

To change our conceptualization of VIO psychology and its reward structures, we need to raise our levels of engagement both with the people in greatest need of decent work around the globe and with the processes required to achieve the SDGs. We need models for critically self-aware research and practice that potentiates, rather than problematizes, the inherent paradoxes and tensions between organizational aims and social justice goals (Mease, 2016). In their call for an emancipatory communitarian approach to vocational psychology, Blustein, McWhirter, and Perry (2005) called for fostering critical consciousness across lines of privilege and power, including among clients, workers, youth, students, researchers, and policy makers. VIO psychologist critical consciousness is important to ensuring that research within WEIRD and POSH contexts carefully and explicitly attends to how privilege, power, and oppression structure the assumptions, methodologies, questions, and findings. We should make visible how the dynamics of privilege, power and oppression shape education and work for *all* populations, not simply those with marginalized identities or statuses.

Linked with the question of who is being studied is that of whose knowledge is considered legitimate. Theories that attend to indigenous knowledge (e.g., Kim, Yang & Hwang, 2006) are too often sidelined in favor of knowledge generated by academicians using scientific methods. Neoliberalism and privilege combine to influence what we consider to be tools, and what we consider to be valid (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). VIO efforts with those most adversely affected by marginalizing conditions may require deconstructing our notions of expertise and authority to center the experiences and knowledge of participants and collaborators.

4.3 Perception

Finally, while it is critical to examine the contexts where our research focuses, and the power implications of who and what we study, of further importance is the question of *how* and *why* we engage in this research. We align with other scholars in calling for a shift away from purely individual, instrumental, competitive perspectives (Bal & Doci, 2018; Bello & Chacon, 2015; Doci & Bal 2018; Islam & Zyphur, 2006; 2009). Explicit consideration should be given to whether research is being driven by a neoliberal/market lens (thus benefiting management and the market) or by an alternative such as the capability approach (which preferences individual freedom of choice), and the implications of this approach for the end users of the research. Just as multicultural training of students acknowledges the hegemony of Whiteness and maleness, so too the training of VIO professionals should acknowledge the hegemony of neoliberalism.

Attending to marginalizing conditions requires transparent alignment of the values of VIO psychologists, organizational values, and values of the discipline. This starts with acknowledging that ideologically-embedded values do, and have always, infuse(d) our research and practice, in spite of a lack of common discourse for illuminating, much less debating, the implicit values and moral implications of our work (Prilleltensky, 1997). A scientist/practitioner model is still a values-based model (Lefkowitz, 2008). We further call for the adoption of a consistent standard and practice of reporting the values and assumptions reflected in our work. Certainly, such an approach is required within qualitative research traditions, in which it is expected that researcher positionality, assumptions, and biases are acknowledged. Yet, rarely is positionality addressed directly within quantitative traditions, in spite of rather widespread recognition that the questions we ask and those that fail to occur to us, the methodologies we employ and those we dismiss, our analyses of findings including what is important and what is irrelevant, and the conclusions we derive and deride, are shaped by and reflect researcher

identities, worldviews, and values (Eagly & Riger, 2014; Unger, 1983).

Drawing out the implicit values underpinning the discipline is an essential step toward transparency of neoliberal influences and developing alternative approaches and perspectives that address the needs of everyone. Making values explicit also requires articulating a vision of what is a "good life" and "good society" (Prilleltensky, 1997), and recognizing that these visions will vary in different social, economic and cultural contexts. We call for work infusing a capability perspective into VIO research and practice such that the quality of the environment (schools, organization, communities, societies) is evaluated in conjunction with marginalizing conditions and individual skills and agency. For any given study, we propose considering how an alternative approach, such as the capability approach, would shift the selection of variables, research methods, and implications (see Nussbaum 2003).

In our definition of social justice and our recommendations for the future, we center on those who are excluded from decent work. This overtly values-based proposition extends beyond neoliberal, individualistic, perception-based approaches to justice. We claim a preferential option for securing non renounceable human rights, recalling the liberatory stance of Martín-Baró, "it is a question of whether psychological knowledge will be placed in the service of constructing a society where the welfare of the few is not built on the wretchedness of the many, where the fulfillment of some does not require that others be deprived, where the interests of the minority do not demand the dehumanization of all" (p. 46, 1994).

Conclusion

In keeping with our aims, we have offered a definition of social justice and a critical psychology lens for evaluating social justice efforts. We invite researchers and practitioners in VIO psychology to apply this definition and lens to more clearly center on the perspectives of

those with the least access to decent work, and to make a preferential option for protecting non-renounceable rights. VIO research and practice should be evaluated in keeping with critical questions of who is and is not being served, and how a given effort interrupts and challenges, or replicates and reinforces, the unfairness of the status quo. To do this, our recommendations focus on making explicit underpinning issues of context, power, and perception.

VIO psychology efforts to enhance the well-being of individuals and organizations at individual, micro and meso levels should continue, but we must broaden our strategies and aims and tackle the macro-level conditions that affect the majority of the world's workers. The scope of change and chronic injustice experienced by so many calls us to re-envision our role and purpose as VIO psychologists. To the extent that VIO psychology explores alternatives to neoliberalism and develops new emancipatory responses that interrupt dominant discourses and support transformation of marginalizing conditions, we have opportunities to effect change and enhance the relevance of our work beyond a narrow segment of society.

Through articulation of promising developments, we identify ways in which VIO psychologists are tackling marginalizing conditions. HWP, PWT, DWA, critical consciousness, and living wages are all initiatives that shift the emphasis of VIO psychology to address the concerns of those historically left out. These initiatives respond to calls by Prilleltensky (1997) and Lefkowitz (2008) to be explicit about our values, and to ensure they reflect the interpersonal, organizational, political or societal conditions that ought to exist. The quest for social justice is not a departure from the goals of psychological science, but a recognition that aims of improving human welfare are subverted by collective failure to see the water we are swimming in. Failure to acknowledge underlying values and morals may sustain illusions of objectivity and keep us 'servants of the powerful' (Lefkowitz, 2008) rather than servants of the vast majorities. If

neoliberalism is the driver of damaging and damning changes to work that adversely affect a majority of the world's population, then we must not be afraid to develop and promote alternatives that center human dignity and thriving over market efficiency.

Similar to Prilleltensky's (1997) call for annunciation, Lefkowitz (2008) contends, "In order to take a normative or moral position, one must move beyond mere description and putatively scientific "value-free" perspectives. One has to take a stand and assert what interpersonal, organization, political or societal conditions ought to exist- and defend that position in moral terms" (p. 446). The United Nations SDGs are a comprehensive, human-centered example of annunciation that can orient VIO psychology social justice efforts for decades. Only by explicitly questioning the values and ideology of the field can we truly begin to shift toward social justice. Lasting transformation in the face of contemporary global challenges requires continued application of the critical psychology lens and development of emancipatory practices to interrupt dominant discourses that center problems of, and solutions to, marginalizing conditions at the individual level.

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Figure 1. Interrogating context, power and perception in VIO social justice contributions